

(Milwaukee, WI)- Congresswoman Gwen Moore announced today that, after some concern that members of the Beijing Ducks basketball team and delegation would not be allowed to enter the country in time, the Bucks - Ducks Business Basketball Exchange will go forth in Milwaukee as planned. The Beijing Ducks' visit and exhibition games, sponsored by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC), were temporarily in peril due to delays in the process of obtaining visas for four of the Chinese basketball players, the head of the delegation, and the assistant coach.

Congresswoman Moore asked the State Department for expedited consideration of the delegation members' visa requests upon learning that their visa interviews were not scheduled to take place until August 15, nearly two weeks after the delegation planned to arrive in the United States and one day after their planned return to China. In response to Congresswoman Moore's request, visa interviews were granted to the six delegation members on July 26, and the visas were issued just yesterday. According to the MMAC, the Beijing Ducks to be the first professional Chinese basketball team to visit the United States.

"As host to the Beijing Ducks, Milwaukee is strengthening ties with China and highlighting the opportunities for Milwaukee companies to export our goods and services there," said Congresswoman Moore. "So many cultures are represented and appreciated here in Milwaukee, and I am proud to lend a hand to strengthen our reputation as an international city by ensuring that this exchange can go forward."

"The MMAC China Council is deeply grateful for the leadership and responsiveness shown by Congresswoman Moore regarding this special opportunity for the businesses and citizens of Milwaukee," said Ulice Payne, Jr., co-chair of the MMAC China Council. "These efforts will lead to closer cultural and commercial ties between the People's Republic of China and the City of Milwaukee."

The Beijing Ducks' visit is part of the MMAC China Council's mission to strengthen Milwaukee's relationship with China in an effort to be recognized as a credible trading partner by Chinese businesses. While in Wisconsin, the Beijing Ducks will play two exhibition games, one in Milwaukee and one in Madison. The Ducks will train at the Bucks' facilities at the Cousins and Bradley centers, and the Ducks' coaches will learn new drills and techniques from NBA and college coaches.

In addition to basketball activities, the Beijing Ducks will also visit various Milwaukee and Madison businesses and attractions, and meet with community and business leaders, as well as Chinese community leaders.

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